



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
May 11, 2020 – 4:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting via WebEx

October 2019-September 2020

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Noah Szugajew, Chair	P	7	0
April Kirk, Vice Chair	P	5	3
Jonathan Bennett	A	2	4
Elizabeth Cupido	P	7	0
Christina Disbrow	P	4	3
Mary Kinirons	P	6	1
Richard Morris	A	4	3
Christi Rice	P	7	0
Terra Sickler	P	5	2
Marisol Simon	P	7	0
Dana Somerstein	P	6	1

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Eveline DeSousa, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
Simone Flores, CDBG Grants Administrator
Jeff Modarelli, City Clerk
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of April 29, 2020, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Szugajew called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2020

Motion made by Vice Chair Kirk, seconded by Ms. Somerstein, to approve. [The **motion** was approved by consent.]

IV. CDBG APPLICATION PRESENTATION – PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Kinirons advised that she would need to recuse herself from voting upon some of the Items to be presented.

- **SoFIA (Impact Broward) / Peter Kaldes**

Victoria Ruiz, representing the South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA), explained that the request would fund their Senior Companion Program, which serves isolated older adults with disabilities in Fort Lauderdale who have low to moderate incomes, as well as their caregivers. Their mission is to empower these individuals as they age. The Senior Companion Program is part of the Corporation for National Community Service Senior Corps, which provides federal funding and requires a 10% local match.

The Senior Companion Program creates volunteer opportunities for adults aged 55 or older and their caregivers by providing individualized companionship and supportive services. In 2019, the Senior Companion Program provided 120 volunteers, 44 of whom were residents of Fort Lauderdale, and served 365 clients, 85 of whom were residents of Fort Lauderdale. There is a current client waiting list of 104 individuals.

The request is for \$50,000, which would expand the number of volunteers and clients served by the program. \$25,920 of the requested funds would provide a tax-free stipend of 18 senior companions as well as mileage. These individuals would assist 45 elderly disabled adults and their caregivers. The remaining \$18,790 would cover 26% of the program director's salary, including taxes and benefits.

Vice Chair Kirk requested clarification from Staff regarding some of the scoring points. Ms. Williams explained that Staff provides two of the numbers on the scoring sheet, including a score for programs that have not applied within the last three years as well as a score for programs that are bringing in additional matching resources. Staff has verified the clients that meet these criteria and provided these two scores.

- **Broward Partnership for the Homeless / Frances Esposito**

Richard McDuffie, representing Broward Partnership for the Homeless, provided a presentation on the organization's funding request, which will cover the costs of food and bus passes for clients. The Partnership provides a full complement of basic services, including medical care and educational opportunities.

- **Turnstone Development / William Schneider**

William Schneider, representing Turnstone Development, stated that this is the agency's second year in applying for CDBG funds. They were allocated \$37,750 the previous year. The request would continue to fund the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, which is a 105-unit multi-family facility for families earning very low incomes. There are 238 residents in the facility, 39 of whom are under the age of 18. 127 of the program's clients earn less than \$16,000 per year.

The goal of the program is to help eligible families gain the skills they need to become gainfully employed and financially independent. Turnstone provides associated services for individual members of households to help tenants achieve independence. The program also addresses needs of housing, transportation, and child care, all of which can be difficult for households at very low income levels.

Chair Szugajew asked if the Family Self-Sufficiency Program is mandatory for all residents living within the facility. Mr. Schneider advised that the program is offered to all 238 residents, although residents are not required to participate.

Ms. Disbrow requested clarification of the income level of most tenants. Mr. Schneider explained that all tenants make less than 60% of the area median income (AMI). The average rent within the facility is \$855/month. Some housing is provided through the Section 8 program.

Ms. Disbrow recalled that Turnstone has applied for CDBG funds in previous years, but noted that the Board has not learned any outcomes from clients served in 2019. She also requested more information regarding the agency's collaboration with partners. Mr. Schneider stated that it can be difficult to bring people into the program, although they reach out to all residents in the facility. In 2019, while 35 families participated, only 50% completed the program. Ms. Disbrow commended Turnstone for having a social worker on staff, but expressed concern with the agency's lack of cash.

Vice Chair Kirk advised that she had struggled with Turnstone's application, as it did not present a clear picture of how the program works. She encouraged Turnstone to reach out to more local partners, adding that the Board needs a clearer understanding of the program's outcomes. Ms. Simon also reported difficulties with the agency's application, including statistics and duplicate sections.

- **Women in Distress of Broward County / Mary Riedel**

Michael Barron, representing Women in Distress of Broward County, reported that in 2019 there were 5395 cases of domestic violence in Broward County, with over 400 of these in the city of Fort Lauderdale. The agency seeks to help survivors immediately find safety, provide for their needs, and help them reestablish their lives.

The funding request would assist 35 Fort Lauderdale residents, provide 5000 emergency shelter nights, and allow for 1400 calls to be answered.

Vice Chair Kirk asked if Women in Distress helps law enforcement better serve survivors of domestic violence. Mr. Barron replied that the reporting of domestic violence has increased and is more readily acknowledged. Women in Distress works closely with the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) as well as with individual Broward County municipalities.

- **Sunshine for All / Maurice Hanono**

Jose Bogaert and Jorge Huguet, representing Sunshine for All, stated that this program has provided over 10 million meals to residents of South Florida since 2010. Eligible clients must be residents of Fort Lauderdale aged 62 or older or disabled who have family incomes of less than 80% of AMI. All meals are selected by a licensed dietitian. Sunshine for All is capable of providing frozen as well as hot meals.

Daily meals are provided Monday through Friday. Meal specialists provide daily reports to the agency. Sunshine for All also maintains contact with meal recipients and conducts surveys and site inspections to ensure compliance and satisfaction. Clients are tracked through recordkeeping, including confirmation of meals served, reports by visitors, and surveys.

Chair Szugajew asked how clients come to the program. Mr. Bogaert replied that many clients are referred through churches and partnerships with complementary nonprofits. Clients are asked to provide proof of income for all household residents during the application process. The agency has 12 staff members, not including subcontracted drivers.

Ms. Disbrow requested clarification of how many meals per day the program's clients receive. Mr. Bogaert stated that they typically receive one meal per day; while the program would prefer to provide three meals for its clients, participating cities often have a limited amount of money with which to serve as many individuals as they can.

Vice Chair Kirk advised that she had experienced some difficulties in understanding the agency's application, including the specific community that would be served by the program.

Ms. Simon also asked for more information regarding the program's goals. It was clarified that 30 program clients would receive five meals per week with the requested funds, which would come to 7500 meals per year.

Vice Chair Kirk observed that some information was missing from her copy of the application, and asked if this would affect scoring. Ms. Williams replied that this would not necessarily have an impact on scoring, but emphasized that all checklist items are required if the Board wished to advance the application. Otherwise the application would be considered unresponsive.

V. CBDO APPLICATION PRESENTATION

- **Mt. Bethel Human Services / Dr. Rosby Glover**

Marie Glover, representing Mt. Bethel Human Services, stated that the organization has served numerous families within Fort Lauderdale through its Family Resource Center (FRC), which provides neighborhood-based support services including a food pantry, computer services, employability and job readiness opportunities, case management, housing referrals, substance abuse and mental health referrals, youth programs, parenting education and support, and more. Priority is given to individuals and families residing in neighborhoods located within revitalization strategy area boundaries.

The FRC program helps families develop and maintain the stable environment necessary for self-sufficiency. Collaborative partners include the Salvation Army, private landlords who assist with housing, Second Chance Society, the United Way, Fire Station #53, and private companies that assist with food. The FY 2020-2021 funding request is for \$85,000 for 40 heads of households and 125 beneficiaries.

Vice Chair Kirk asked if any other funding is currently designated for the FRC program. Ms. Wells confirmed this, adding that the program has been in existence for over 10 years. Clients are referred through Broward 2-1-1, the residential area in which the facility is located, and word of mouth.

- **H.O.M.E.S., Inc. / Linda Taylor, Katherine Barry**

Linda Taylor, representing Housing Opportunities, Mortgage Assistance, and Effective Neighborhood Solutions (H.O.M.E.S.), Inc., stated that their program creates a home and community for 15 young people at the residence. Clients pay between \$300 and \$400 per month in rent and have the opportunity to participate in paid internships. At present, only four clients are unemployed, and all 15 are in school at either Broward College or technical college.

Chair Szugajew requested more information about the program's partnerships. Ms. Taylor explained that H.O.M.E.S., Inc. is part of a continuum of care and receives funding from the Broward Children's Services Council, among other agencies that work with youth who have aged out of foster or relative care. It was noted that the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has affected job placement for some clients.

Ms. Simon noted that she had been unable to access the section on management capacity and agency information in the program's application. Ms. Taylor clarified that the agency is 21 years old and the program has been in operation for 11 years.

With all presentations complete, CDBG Grants Administrator Simone Flores showed the CDBG Public Services ranking compiled from the Board members' individual submitted scores, as well as the City's funding recommendations. The FY 2020-2021 CDBG

allocation amount has not yet been transmitted to the City, so proposed allocations are based on the previous year's amount of \$230,000. There is a mandated allocation of \$30,000 for Hope Fair Housing, which reduces the remaining amount to roughly \$200,000.

Chair Szugajew pointed out that the City does not recommend any agency would receive the full amount they requested: each would receive a percentage of their request based on their scoring. The ranking prior to presentations was as follows:

- Women in Distress of Broward County: 94%
- SoFIA: 93%
- Broward Partnership for the Homeless: 91%
- Turnstone Development: 77%
- Sunshine for All: 74%

Ms. Kinirons asked if the Board members must reevaluate their scores based on the presentations by the next meeting. Ms. Williams stated that this could necessitate a special meeting in the month of May. She asked that the members mail or physically submit their hard copies of the scoring sheet or provide their adjusted scores on the shared spreadsheet.

Ms. Rice advised that she had not submitted any scores for an application that was deemed non-responsive, as this designation is usually disqualifying for grant funds. Ms. Williams replied that this application was missing some of its documentation upon submission, and it would be up to the Board to decide whether or not the application should go forward, considering the needs of the community. The minimum score an application must have to be considered for funding is 70%. Although the application in question was deemed non-responsive upon submission, Staff had not spoken with the Applicant to inform them that information was missing, as they are not permitted to contact an Applicant during the review period.

Chair Szugajew suggested that the agency in question be permitted seven business days to submit the missing information.

Motion made by Ms. Simon, seconded by Vice Chair Kirk, to notify the agency that they have been deemed non-responsive and they have seven days to provide the necessary documentation. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 6-2 (Ms. Rice and Ms. Sickler dissenting). (Ms. Kinirons abstained. A memorandum of voting conflict is attached to these minutes.)

It was clarified that once the documentation has been provided by the agency, the Board members would adjust their scores accordingly and send the revised scoring sheet to Staff in advance of the next meeting.

VI. HOPWA and HOPWA CARES

Ms. Williams reported that HUD has indicated the City will receive an allocation of \$1,035,000 under the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (HOPWA CARES) Act. This amount is specifically intended to cover COVID-19-related costs incurred by the HOPWA program, such as extended hotel vouchers, Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU), a food component for residential facilities, and similar needs. A webinar is scheduled for May 12, 2020 to provide more information.

Staff has already undertaken the groundwork necessary to amend the Annual Action Plan in order to receive these additional HUD funds. They have reached out to all current HOPWA providers to determine the types of costs they have incurred due to COVID-19 and have calculated this information in a spreadsheet that will be shared with the Board in advance of any funding revisions.

Ms. Williams continued that in anticipation of the \$1,035,000 in additional funding, the City may amend the FY 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan under which they are currently operating. This will facilitate expenditures until the additional funds are received and expedite the process by which HOPWA agencies are reimbursed for costs they have already incurred. These dollars would then be replenished from the additional funds when they are received.

Motion made by Ms. Simon, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to amend the Annual Action Plan to reflect the needs generated by COVID-19 and to utilize current funding for those agencies who are incurring costs now in expectation of the federal funding that will arrive. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 8-0. (Ms. Somerstein did not vote.)

VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER

None.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Linda Taylor, representing H.O.M.E.S., Inc., requested clarification of when the Board's vote on funding would take place. It was noted that the vote would take place within the next two weeks, although a date has not been set at this time. Agencies applying for CDBG funds will be informed of the meeting date once it is determined.

IX. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was noted that the next meeting will determine CDBG funding allocations, and if additional information is available on the HOPWA CARES Act funding, it will be presented to the Board as well.

X. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

Vice Chair Kirk advised that the CDBG process would proceed more smoothly if it were possible for applications to be submitted online.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]